

Williams Volunteer Fire Department, an activity that is of great importance to the public, and quite honestly frequent risk to the volunteer and their families. They are charter members of Grace Lutheran Church, and life members of VFW Post 6950 and its auxiliary.

They have lived very full lives, and continue to try to do more each day. It was very touching to have Walter describe for me his great love, appreciation, and gratitude for his wife Margaret, for having put up with and taking care of him for the last 50 years.

If we want to praise family values and their importance for young people, we need look no further than the lives and commitment of Walter and Margaret Barber. Mr. Speaker, I ask you and all of our colleagues to join me in wishing them the happiest of anniversaries, and many more to come.

ST. PETERSBURG FOLK FAIR SOCIETY HONORS JOSEPH MATHEWS OF SEMINOLE, FL

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, St. Petersburg is home to the St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society, or SPIFFS as it is known, which is one of the most unique organizations of its kind anywhere in our Nation. The highlight of every year comes in March when SPIFFS hosts its annual folk fair to celebrate the blend of ethnic backgrounds and history that have made the Pinellas County area of Florida I represent such a special and diverse community in which to live.

This was the 22d annual folk fair, and over 55 ethnic groups participated to showcase their culture, ethnic diversity, and foods, as well as provide continuous entertainment from around the world. For the first time this year's festival was held outdoors in St. Petersburg's Vinoy Park.

In conjunction with this year's folk fair, the Central Florida Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association sponsored an essay competition entitled "Why I'm Glad America Is a Nation of Immigrants." The winning essay was submitted by Joseph Mathews, a seventh grader at Seminole Middle School. Joseph was recognized for his essay during the opening ceremonies of the folk fair, and it is an honor for me to bring this young man's thoughts to the attention of my colleagues today.

"WHY I'M GLAD AMERICA IS A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS"

(By Joseph Mathews)

The American dream. It's something we born on U.S. soil take for granted, but to others, it means hope, and a way of life. Many immigrants in America have lived the dream and added to it.

Madelaine Albright was brought to the United States by her parents to escape the holocaust. America didn't only mean her future, it also meant freedom, a place of refuge, and a chance to serve as the first woman Secretary of State.

Irving Berlin was another fortunate and successful immigrant. After traveling to the U.S. at the age of 5, Berlin became one of our most famous songwriters. "God Bless America" expresses his feelings about his new home.

Immigrants touch the lives of Americans on a smaller scale as well. My piano teacher, Gloria Bolivar, immigrated to California from Mexico as a teenager, bringing her talent, the knowledge she had gained, and nothing more. She told the Stanford Music Conservatory that she had no money, nowhere to stay, spoke little English, and needed all of her tuition paid. During the audition, Ms. Bolivar had played but a few moments when the professors said, "We want you." She became a top graduate. After several years as a concert artist, she is now teaching in Florida, and has enriched my life by sharing her musical gifts with me.

For hundreds of years, foreigners have travelled in a continuous wave to our country, bringing experience, knowledge, and skills. I am definitely sure it should remain so.

IN TRIBUTE TO MARY LOU McGRATH

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I pause today to join the city of Cambridge, MA, in paying tribute to local hero and community leader, Mary Lou McGrath, who is retiring after a long and distinguished career in the field of education and in service to her city, State, and country.

For the past 40 years, Mary Lou McGrath has been instrumental in determining the shape and direction of the public schools in Cambridge. After receiving her Masters of Education from Boston State College, Mary Lou went on to become an educator in and later the first Superintendent of the Cambridge Public School System.

In her years as Superintendent, Mary Lou McGrath has led the way toward the future of education through constant reform and innovation. Collaborating with local colleges and universities, businesses, health organizations, and government agencies, Mary Lou has sought to enhance the experience of education for both student and teacher alike. Her work has included the creation of model programs in the areas of bilingual education, gay/lesbian student education, and special needs education.

One can only begin to describe the depth of Mary Lou's devotion of time and energy to issues concerning the youth of her community. Serving on various boards and committees, Mary Lou has worked to address issues of civil rights, violence, drug use, and other youth-related concerns.

In recognition of her dedication to and efforts on behalf of the welfare of our young people and the ideals of education, Mary Lou McGrath has been presented the Ford educational "Woman of the Year" by the Cambridge YMCA. These are only a few among many honors accorded Mary Lou throughout her career.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Cambridge, MA, owe their gratitude to Mary Lou McGrath. On June 19, they will gather to salute her 40 years of devoted service. I ask my colleagues in the House to join with them and me in extending a simple, "thank you and Godspeed to Mary Lou McGrath. She has made us all proud.

IN MEMORIAM, HELEN BERNSTEIN AND ALBERT SHANKER

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, with the sudden passing of Helen Bernstein last week, public education in Los Angeles suffered a terrible blow, one that will continue to ache for many years to come. Only 52 years old, Helen was struck by an automobile while crossing a street to address the Miracle Mile Residents Association.

Those who were fortunate enough to glimpse the private Helen know that her daughter, mother, and brothers will mourn the premature loss of an unquenchable source of energy and warmth. To them, I offer my deepest sympathies.

Those of us who were familiar with the public Helen—and who were products of the Los Angeles Unified School District—are painfully aware that the voice of its most articulate critic and energetic champion has been silenced forever. The civic life of Los Angeles will be impoverished by that silence.

Helen's experience, intelligence, and wisdom will be especially missed in the months and years immediately ahead: Her beloved school system, the second largest in the Nation, will be negotiating difficult passage through budget restrictions, multicultural complexities, performance standards, and various proposals for reform and restructuring.

Only 5 months ago, Helen became Mayor Richard Riordan's first education advisor. Previously, she had taught history in three different public schools and served as president of United Teachers-Los Angeles from 1990 to 1996. At the time of her death, Helen was running for election to the commission that will rewrite the Los Angeles City Charter. She was also developing a national teacher union reform network.

Helen's passing, coupled with that of Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, will be a disorienting effect on the movement to revitalize public education in America. Congress, the President, State departments of education, and local school districts across the country are now placing a high priority on educational reform; but all of us feel an urgent need for the patient counsel of battle-tested veterans—in short, for the wisdom of a Helen Bernstein and an Albert Shanker. Only members of their immediate families will miss their presence more than public officials grappling with complexities of again creating a matchless system of public education.

THE COLLEGE STUDENT TAX RELIEF ACT OF 1997

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 1997

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, in recent years the price tag on a college education has gone through the roof. Last year, the General Accounting Office reported that between 1980-95, tuition at 4-year public colleges and